

# The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures

ISSN 1203-1542

<http://www.jhsonline.org> and

<http://purl.org/jhs>



Articles in JHS are being indexed in the ATLA Religion Database, [RAMBI](#), and [BiBIL](#). Their abstracts appear in Religious and Theological Abstracts. The journal is archived by *Library and Archives Canada* and is accessible for consultation and research at the Electronic Collection site maintained by [Library and Archives Canada](#) (for a direct link, click [here](#)).

## VOLUME 9, ARTICLE 17

**RAYMOND F. PERSON, JR., ED.**

**IN CONVERSATION WITH THOMAS RÖMER, *THE SO-CALLED DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: A SOCIOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL AND LITERARY INTRODUCTION* (LONDON: T. & T. CLARK, 2005).**

**IN CONVERSATION WITH  
THOMAS RÖMER, *THE SO-CALLED  
DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL AND  
LITERARY INTRODUCTION* (LONDON: T. &  
T. CLARK, 2005)**

RAYMOND F. PERSON, JR., ED.  
OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY,  
ADA, OHIO, USA

1. Raymond F. Person, Jr., Introduction.
2. Richard D. Nelson, A Response to Thomas Römer, *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*.
3. Steven L. McKenzie, A Response to Thomas Römer, *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*.
4. Eckart Otto, Deuteronomy between The Pentateuch and The Deuteronomistic History: Some Remarks on Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*.
5. Yairah Amit, The Book of Judges: Fruit of 100 Years of Creativity.
6. Thomas Römer, Response to Richard Nelson, Steven McKenzie, Eckart Otto, and Yairah Amit.

## INTRODUCTION

RAYMOND F. PERSON, JR., ED.  
OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY,  
ADA, OHIO, USA

In a published review of Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History* I concluded the following:

Römer has clearly demonstrated his command of the primary and secondary literature and has deftly synthesized many disparate arguments and approaches into a coherent and wide-ranging approach of his own, an approach that I suspect will eventually gain relatively wide acceptance.<sup>1</sup>

I am therefore pleased that in the first year I chaired the steering committee for the Deuteronomistic History section of the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (November 2008 in Boston, MA) we held a special session reviewing his work and that I now have the opportunity to serve as guest editor for this collection.

The four reviewers were chosen, because they represent different approaches to the Deuteronomistic History. Richard Nelson represents the dual-redaction model popular among Americans; Steven McKenzie represents the “neo-Nothians,” who argue for a single individual, the Deuteronomist; Eckart Otto has been involved in the recent discussions in Europe, especially concerning how Deuteronomy relates to both the Pentateuch, Hexateuch, and the Deuteronomistic History; and Yairah Amit represents discussions of literary/narrative approaches to the Deuteronomistic History.

In addition to the responses published here in revised form, I must acknowledge that the period of open discussion following the prepared responses generated a lot of interest. Clearly Römer’s book and the panelists’ responses to it provided much for those attending the session to contemplate. In fact, because of the out-

---

<sup>1</sup> Raymond F. Person, Jr., “Review of Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*,” *CBQ* 69 (2007), 562.

spoken interest in exploring the issue of how the book of Deuteronomy relates to Genesis-Numbers and Joshua-Kings (explicitly suggested first in Otto's response), the Deuteronomistic History section and the Pentateuch section of the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature are planning a special joint-session on this very topic. Therefore, I want to thank Thomas Römer and each of the panelists for their contributions below and how issues raised in their contributions will continue the discussion concerning the (so-called) Deuteronomistic History and its relationship to the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

## **A RESPONSE TO THOMAS C. RÖMER, THE SO-CALLED DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY**

RICHARD D. NELSON  
PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY,  
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY,  
DALLAS, TEXAS, USA

This SBL program unit in one format or another has been meeting for many years. What can still be said about the meaning of the cipher “Deuteronomistic History”? Is there anything on which the majority of those gathered here would agree? Let me suggest the following minimal description.

The designation “Deuteronomistic History” communicates the conviction that a significant undertaking in authorship or redaction took place at some time either somewhat before or sometime after the debacles of 597 and 586. Using inherited sources to some extent, this literary undertaking generated a connected narrative in chronological order describing some portion of Israel’s history in the land. This was done on the basis of theological perspectives characteristic of the book of Deuteronomy. The narrative later underwent subsequent revisions and was eventually divided into individual books.

Beyond this relatively unfocused description, I suspect we would find little agreement on much of anything else, except that the title “Deuteronomistic History” and its incarnated reflex “Deuteronomistic Historian” provide handy and wonderfully elastic shorthand phrases that mask a multitude of problems. Students of the Hebrew Bible often use the term merely to acknowledge in the most general way the evident theological and literary interconnections within Deuteronomy-Joshua-Judges-Samuel-Kings.

### **THOMAS RÖMER’S DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY**

I remain unclear as to what “so-called” is intended to mean in the book title. Although this may not be true in German or French, in English this expression has a negative flavor that implies that the following description is dubious or questionable in some sense. Are we being invited to entertain doubts about whether the material

under investigation is really Deuteronomistic? Or properly a history? However, the term “so-called” certainly ought to remind us of the slippery and elusive nature of the concept we have gathered to talk about.

Thomas Römer presents us with a fresh proposal about the composition of the Deuteronomistic History. He demonstrates that his hypothesis can explain many features of the text before us, if one is willing to follow him in certain assumptions and in his diachronic breakdowns of individual passages. The Römer version of the Deuteronomistic History is essentially a layer model that traces successive redactional stages as strata through the whole text. As such it is similar to the Göttingen school’s *layer model* of two topically oriented DtrN and DtrP strata overlaying an exilic DtrH base text in numerous, often relatively small units. At the same time, Römer’s Deuteronomistic History shares with the rival *block model* the understanding that such redactional stages can be coordinated with and understood on the basis of definite watershed moments in history. For Römer those three decisive periods are the reform of Josiah, the exile, and the Persian era. The Deuteronomistic History proper—in the sense of a large scale narrative history from Joshua to the late kings of Judah—was the product of the exile. However, the most important of its sources consisted of previously unconnected scrolls that made up a sort of “Deuteronomistic library.” This pre-exilic library consisted of a Josianic Deuteronomy along with Deuteronomistically-influenced versions of Joshua, the History of David’s Rise, and Kings. These individual scrolls emerged in connection with Josiah’s resurgence and reform. They formed the basis for an exilic historiography work that was finally updated in the Persian period. In summary, Römer postulates an exilic Deuteronomistic History based in part on book length Josiah-era sources already in Deuteronomistic form, and modified by a second, Persian era redaction.

As he presents his thesis, Römer takes us through various literary critical analyses of individual texts that isolate these three major layers, partially on the basis of textual irregularities and incongruities, but mostly on the basis of differing ideologies and topical emphases. However, in my understanding of what I have read, the foundation of his model rests for the most part on three disputable contentions that I wish to explore.

First, that nothing more extensive than a library of distinct Deuteronomistic scrolls is conceivable in the late monarchic period and that a connected narrative history is improbable until the exile.

Second, that Deuteronomy itself is best viewed as a Josianic era book and a result of the same impulse that generated a Deuteronomistic Joshua and a Deuteronomistic Kings. That is to say, Deuteronomy did not originate before Josiah and was not the basis of his reform.

Third, that the “book finding” story in 2 Kings 22–23 is nothing more than a “foundation myth” without any historical grounding and that this episode entered the text of 2 Kings 22–23 only in the Persian period.

### **A LIBRARY OF DEUTERONOMISTIC SCROLLS?**

Römer argues for the notion of a library of individual scrolls, including what one might call proto-Deuteronomy, proto-Joshua, and proto-Kings. His strongest argument for this position occurs when he points out that these three textual entities are influenced by or even modeled after three different and separate genres of Assyrian literature, namely vassal treaties, conquest accounts, and chronicles about kings. Römer denies the possibility of anyone putting these separate genres together into a larger scale history during the Josiah period because there would be no need to do so at that point (p. 71). Only the critical need to make sense out of defeat and exile could have led to the Deuteronomistic History’s wider historical horizon. This horizon is evidenced in the evaluative “end of era” summaries of the Deuteronomistic History proper (Joshua 1, 23; Judges 2:6–19; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Kings 8; 2 Kings 17), which characterize defeat and exile as divine judgments (p. 72).

Part of his argument is that catastrophes lead to historical reflection, and he cites Thucydides and Berossos as examples. However, we might remember that the enterprise of Herodotus was triggered by the amazing Greek victory over Persia.

Of course, there has been a long debate about whether the mere presence of a threat of exile requires a post-597/586 date or only a common-sense awareness of standard Assyrian foreign policy as exemplified in the fate of the Northern Kingdom. Amos and Hosea have no trouble looking forward to this possibility as a likely result of national sin (Amos 5:5, 27; 6:7–8; 7:11, 17; Hos 10:8). Moreover, the relationship between act and consequence is deeply embedded in Deuteronomy and in Israelite culture as a whole. Römer’s own Josianic era Deuteronomy incorporates defeat and exile into its curse section (28:32, 41), imitating the Assyrian vassal treaty model.

But Römer’s point is much more subtle than the mere assertion that any concern with or mention of exile requires a post 597/586 date. He quite properly points out that there is a great difference between the simple awareness of the threat of or even the likelihood of defeat and exile, on the one hand, and a cultural milieu so defined by the brutal fact of exile that one is driven to write a history to explain and rationalize it. To put it another way, using the threat of defeat and exile to motive attitudes and behavior is one thing; anguished attempts to explain and come to terms with a catastrophe that totally destabilizes one’s national identity and belief system is something quite different.

One has to ask, however, whether the Deuteronomistic History really is, at its core, a work permeated and driven by a concern to explain exile and defeat. Many fundamental elements in the Deuteronomistic History have nothing to do with the question of cataclysmic and total defeat and forced deportation. These include promotion of Deuteronomy as the law to be obeyed *in the land*, celebration of the dynasty of David, justification for the disaster that engulfed the Northern Kingdom, and advocacy of the reformist policies of Josiah. Threats of disaster and examples of defeat appear in the service of these goals, but those passages and blocks of text that offer specific explanations and justifications for the events of 597/586 can be isolated and understood as additions and overlays to a historical narrative that originally had nothing to do with that concern.

My objection takes us back to the impasse that has stymied us since the publication of Frank Cross's seminal article advocating a double redaction approach exactly forty years ago.<sup>2</sup> I confess I have no idea how to overcome this stalemate.

The Deuteronomistic History represented a revolutionary intellectual advance. It moved beyond the production of individual scrolls with limited horizons of temporal concern. The literary event we call the Deuteronomistic History organized such sources into a narrative history covering hundreds of years of Israel's existence in the land. It presented that long stretch of time as comprising distinct eras, as measurable in a coordinated chronology, and as elucidated in terms of obedience to or violation of principles contained in an authoritative law book. It seems to me that it is precisely monarchic, Judahite scribes who would be particularly well placed to take this groundbreaking forward step. The necessary source documents would be at hand. There would be a degree of day-to-day stability, time, and resources beyond what is reasonable to assume for displaced persons surviving in an alien culture. The royal establishment that paid their salaries would be anxious to support such an enterprise. Promoting a regime that supports values and policies that the scribes themselves held dear seems to be a perfectly reasonable motive for taking up this project.

### DEUTERONOMY AS A JOSIANIC ERA BOOK?

I believe Römer's point here is that the book did not cause Josiah's reform but that the reform generated the book. The argument runs as follows. Josiah's reform did not need a book to trigger it. His actions make perfect sense in the historical context as rational political moves. The consequence of dating Deuteronomy in the reign

---

<sup>2</sup> Frank M. Cross, "The Structure of the Deuteronomic History," *Perspectives in Jewish Learning* 3 (1968), 9–24.



of Josiah is effectively to exclude any notion of a Josiah-era Deuteronomistic History using Deuteronomy as its theological foundation. Thus, there is no room in the chronology for a pre-exilic Deuteronomistic History.

Römer lays heavy stress on the undoubted Assyrian influences on Deuteronomy. But for him this Assyrian influence takes place in the period of Josiah rather than in the reign of Hezekiah or the long Manasseh period. This seems to me to be a mistaken notion. Certainly post-colonial theory teaches that a colonizing power's cultural dominance does not evaporate when colonial rule ends. But certainly the *most* likely period for substantial Assyrian influence on Judah's literary productions would seem to be the period of Assyrian political and cultural domination, that is in the time of Hezekiah in the context of the events of 720 and 701 and, even more so, during the time of Manasseh in the context of his deferential vassalage.

Of course, a Deuteronomy written with official support as an open access document is inconceivable in the Manasseh period, but a subversive Deuteronomy is not. Römer brusquely dismisses any notion of an "underground movement" ("This sounds nice, but is not very realistic," pp. 68–69), which puzzles me. After all, *somebody* with *some* sort of power base was around ready to assassinate Amon and guide the boy king Josiah in different paths. Indeed Deuteronomy sounds very much like an oppositional law book or a somewhat utopian constitutional proposal (*Verfassungsentwurf*). As such, it is not unambiguously friendly to the monarchy or to priestly concepts of cult. Deuteronomy can easily be read as nostalgic and subversive support for what its authors yearned for in Hezekiah's religious and political policies. I see nothing impossible about the notion of disaffected groups embedded in the Jerusalem bureaucracy. This scenario explains the prevailing utopian character of Deuteronomy and (if one wishes to permit it) even allows the troublesome law of the king (17:14–20) to remain as part of such a pre-exilic Deuteronomy.

It seems perfectly believable that such a dangerous document would be kept out of sight, and then produced as a genuine or staged "find" decades later. Had it emerged in a different geopolitical situation it doubtlessly would have been ignored or burned (consider Jeremiah 36). Again, what better place could there be for such a discovery, again genuine or staged, than the temple, where parallels in neighboring cultures suggest that a library or archive of scrolls would have been kept?

### BOOK FINDING AS A PERSIAN ERA ADDITION?

The narrative of the discovery of the law book in 2 Kings 22 of course represents a standard literary motif, a typical "foundation myth" of the period. Nevertheless, the use of this literary format is

no decisive argument against the historicity of what it reports. Are we to imagine that no Mesopotamian kings ever publicized their restoration accomplishments on the basis of foundation inscriptions that actually existed? Certainly real foundation tablets were discovered, or at least were the objects of staged discoveries, and then used to support current policies. Römer reminds us that Nabonidus reports finding the old foundation stone of Naram-Sin in order to support his *contemporary* policies. The claims of a “book finding” public relations effort would work even better if such a discovery event actually happened or could be acted out as a matter of political stagecraft. If the king could be seen to read a real book and really tear his clothes over its curses, all the better. What a great idea . . . to sell a reform package, likely to prove unpopular with many, with the help of a book from the Mosaic past. Moreover, it is completely believable that the subsequent spin and political utilization of the event would be eventually be described in the Deuteronomistic History using conventional terms well-known to educated court scribes, that is to say, the “book finding motif” beloved by their Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultural mentors.

Römer must perform radical literary surgery on 2 Kings 22–23 to excise the book of the law (which is seen as Persian era) and Huldah (which is seen as exilic) from the base text reporting Josiah’s Temple restoration and subsequent reforms. His course of action at this point will impress some people more than others, but I am not persuaded. Römer essentially strip-mines Huldah, the book, and the tomb of the man of God from the base text. There is no point in fighting about the details of this analysis, but I must ask a couple of questions.

The author has obviously used 2 Kgs 12:10–16 from the section on Joash as a template to write 22:3–7 in order to set something up. Can all this work have been done merely to lead into Shaphan’s report on the transfer of funds (v 9), something which does not motivate or connect to any of Josiah’s subsequent reform actions beginning in 23:4?

Without the book and Huldah, there is an unbridged narrative gap between Temple restoration and national reform. What motivates Josiah’s careful step-by-step reversal of Manasseh’s actions?

Römer assigns Huldah and her oracle to the Babylonian period Deuteronomistic History and the “book finding” story to the even later Persian revision. However, excising a few words involving the book and Josiah’s reaction to it out of the Huldah episode (22:13aBb, 16b, 19bB) leaves us with another unexplained narrative gap. What are the king’s counselors asking Huldah about? To what threat or crisis is her oracle responding?

Actually, “book finding” is an integral element in the flow of 2 Kings 22–23. It is set up by the author’s use of material from Joash’s temple restoration project and motivates the solicitation of

Huldah and her response. By way of Josiah's covenant ceremony, it also motivates the sweeping reforms that follow. Although Persian period readers living far from Jerusalem may later have read the book finding story as a suggestion that the book of the law could serve as a replacement for the Temple, as Römer suggests, this thought is nowhere inherent or implicit in the narrative itself. The function of the book-finding motif in its textual context is perfectly clear. It sets the stage for Huldah's oracle and motivates Josiah's actions.

A reform without a book is certainly a *historical* possibility. Josiah's reform fits perfectly into the international situation between fading Assyrian power and upcoming Egyptian hegemony, that is from the accession of Nabopolassar to the battle of Carchemish. It also fits the decline in the popularity of astral cults visible in Palestinian seals (cf. 2 Kgs 23:5, 11) and of Assyrian cultural influence in general. Cult centralization would represent a reasonable financial and political policy. Jerusalem's desire to undermine the rival sanctuary of Bethel is understandable. The names in the story are historical. So a reform without a book is historically possible. However, the real question is whether a reform without a book is a *literary and theological* possibility in either a pre-exilic or an exilic Deuteronomistic History. Although all mention of the "book" has been removed from Römer's version of his exilic Deuteronomistic History, repeated mention of the law of Moses apart from the notion of "book" remains out of necessity (1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 10:31; 14:6; 23:25).

To explore the question from another direction, would a Josianic reformation without Deuteronomy as its publically declared, foundational document adequately explain the tremendous dominance and authority of Deuteronomy in later periods? The claimed authorship by Moses and incorporation into an exilic Deuteronomistic History would help, but public royal sponsorship and actual implementation would advance Deuteronomy's reputation very effectively.

### WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Moving beyond specific comments on Römer's book, I would like to present some questions of a more general nature. Perhaps it is time for a "reality check" in the study of the Deuteronomistic History. Is diachronic research into the Deuteronomistic History as it has unfolded over the last four decades stuck in a methodological impasse? Perhaps there are proposals that have not yet been advanced and undoubtedly there are new combinations of the basic building block theses that have not yet been assembled. However, I wonder if we are really getting anywhere. The burgeoning popularity of synchronic studies into the constituent books is evidence, I believe, of a malaise over the entire diachronic project.

One could assemble a long list of very basic questions about which there is little or no agreement. Let me catalogue some of these.

What was the initial historical situation that triggered the original composition of the Deuteronomistic History? The geo-political adventures of Hezekiah? The reforms of Josiah or perhaps his death? Catastrophic defeat and deportation?

Insofar as the base text of the Deuteronomistic History was supplemented, is this best explained in terms of a “layer model” (*Schichtmodel*) according to which additions were made here and there throughout the work from various perspectives. Or should we think in terms of a “block model” (*Blockmodel*) according to which an originally coherent whole was supplemented, predominantly by adding larger units of material into and at the end of it?

What were the triggering events or historical situations that led to such additional layers or blocks? Or in the case of layers, since these represent different ideological concerns, what different social or ideological groups might have been responsible?

Which non-Deuteronomistic self-contained blocks of material, such as the Succession History or the Elijah/Elisha legend cycle, are to be considered sources used by Deuteronomistic History and which were later additions? More importantly, what are the criteria for making these judgments?

Was the Deuteronomistic Historian an “honest broker” (Noth: “*erlicher Makler*”)<sup>3</sup> of inherited traditions who let them speak even when in some disagreement with them? Or should all divergences from Deuteronomistic orthodoxy be treated as additions?

What role does the relationship between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings and the textual history of Chronicles play in our understanding of the origin of the Deuteronomistic History?

How do we date ideologies? Is pro-David material intended to support the Davidic monarchy or does it represent post-disaster hopes and dreams? Is Deuteronomy’s being an address to those “outside the land” related to the situation of exiles or representatives of the Persian era expatriate community, or is it simply a monarchy period literary fiction? Are attacks on supposedly Canaanite religion a vilification of the people’s traditional religious practices of the late monarchy or support for a segregationist policy in the Persian period?

Should one define as Deuteronomistic anything beyond material with clear linguistic and ideological ties to Deuteronomy?

How long was the Deuteronomistic History understood and transmitted as a whole, before it was broken into disconnected

---

<sup>3</sup> Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1943), 95.

books that attracted supplementation at the end of scrolls (Judges 17–21, 2 Samuel 21–24)? Both Deuteronomy and Joshua have supplements that attach them to the Tetrateuch (Deuteronomy 34, Joshua 24). When did this happen?

Should redactional developments in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History be tracked together as Römer does? Or should Deuteronomy be considered as an autonomous text block with a history of later redaction unconnected with that of the Deuteronomistic History?

How does text criticism relate to redaction history? Do later textual developments uncovered by a comparison of LXX, Qumran, and MT really relate to ongoing Deuteronomistic scribal activity?

And most importantly: How much can be denied to Deuteronomistic History (as additions, as a second edition, as layers) before the whole hypothesis represented by the cipher Deuteronomistic History loses its coherence?

Now permit me two final observations. First, I have come to believe that where one ends up in Deuteronomistic History research depends to a large extent on where one starts. Römer apparently starts with the undeniable layering of perspectives in Deuteronomy 12 and a conviction that the “book finding” element in 2 Kings 22–23 is a very late element in the text. Noth began by reconceptualizing the older notions of individual Deuteronomistic redactions of individual books. This process started with his 1938 Joshua commentary that discovered no Pentateuchal sources and uncovered a pre-Deuteronomistic book behind the Deuteronomistic version (the *Sammler*).<sup>4</sup> Cross started from what seemed to him to be an unbearable ideological clash between inevitable punishment caused by the sins of Manasseh and the promises made to David.<sup>5</sup> Nelson started from the close similarities between Judges 2:1–5; 6:7–10 and 2 Kings 17.<sup>6</sup> The Göttingen school started from Smend’s (1971) separation of vv 7–9 (law) from the base text of Joshua 1:1–9. He then connected these verses to materials in Joshua and Judges that he described as the nomistic redactor, DtrN. Once this foundation was laid one can see how Dietrich could easily designate prophetic stories and ideology as DtrP and how Veijola could apply this model to contradictory opinions about kingship in Samuel.<sup>7</sup> Provan began by emphasizing the question of

---

<sup>4</sup> Martin Noth, *Das Buch Josua* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1938).

<sup>5</sup> Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

<sup>6</sup> Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOT Sup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> Rudolph Smend, “Das Gesetz und die Völker. Ein Beitrag zur deuteronomistischen Redaktionsgeschichte,” H. W. Wolff (ed.), *Probleme Bib-*

the high places (*bamoth*), which led naturally to a focus on Hezekiah as the focal point of the Deuteronomistic History.<sup>8</sup> And so on.

Second, much also depends on the breadth of one's focus. A narrower focus on individual passages and internal contradictions tends to lead to something like the layer model. A broader focus on larger plot movements and macro-structures tends to lead to block model solutions. A narrower focus leads one to conclusions in which each separate notion or ideology is treated as a distinct and separable layer. A broader focus makes one more tolerant of the vision that an author might be simultaneously pro-Davidic, pro-nomistic, and pro-prophetic – and also willing to let sources sometimes speak their own mind without anxiously correcting them overmuch in the direction of the author's opinions. Highly detailed textual breakdowns are vulnerable to disbelief but allow one to work with concrete texts. Highly general, broad brush thematic approaches are vulnerable to the charge of oversimplification, but allow one to appreciate literary artistry and engage with the text in something closer to its final form.

Some of this I suspect boils down to a matter of differing scholarly cultures in different geographical and national settings. That is why face-to-face meetings like these, where our differences can be appreciated, negotiated, and put in proper perspective are so important. May this program unit have a long and fruitful life.

---

*lischer Theologie* (Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 494–509; Walter Dietrich, *Prophezie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1972); and Timo Veijola, *Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie: eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Ian Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988).

## A RESPONSE TO THOMAS RÖMER, *THE SO-CALLED DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY*

STEVEN L. MCKENZIE  
RHODES COLLEGE,  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, USA

One of the “dirty little secrets” of the academic discipline of biblical scholarship is the rift that often divides Europe and North America, particularly when it comes to methodology relating to historical and diachronic literary reconstruction. This rift has been especially apparent over the last three and one-half decades in the study of the Deuteronomistic History. In his book, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, Thomas Römer has made a valiant effort at bridging it.

Representing the Deuteronomistic History as a “historical fresco,” Römer’s survey of its contents vividly illustrates both its chronological continuity and thus overall unity but also its diversity of materials. His overview of the history of scholarship on the Former Prophets begins with his neighbor, John Calvin; notes the divide between the European and American approaches in the works of Smend and Cross and their adherents; defends the unity of the Deuteronomistic History while recognizing the validity of recent observations of its internal diversity; and ends, in good Swiss fashion, by calling for compromise.

He is not the first to propose compromise. However, it is hard to imagine any scholar more capable or in a better position to float a potentially successful compromise than Thomas Römer. Long engaged in critical study of the Deuteronomistic History, he is a long-time member and former chair of the steering committee of the Deuteronomistic History Section, which is sponsoring this session. This book demonstrates a thorough acquaintance with primary sources in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, ancient Near East, and Greece. His equally thorough familiarity with the history of scholarship and the voluminous contemporary work in what have become subfields dealing with the Pentateuch, Former Prophets/Deuteronomistic History, and Prophets is due in large measure to his exceptional facility with German, French, and English. In addition to these assets, Römer brings expertise in the use of social-scientific criteria to the analysis of the biblical material.

Because of all of these qualifications, and the fact that he is good friend, I approached his book on the Deuteronomistic History, which I was privileged to see in manuscript form, with anticipation and great expectations. And, I was not disappointed. This is, as I wrote in my blurb on its back cover, a *tour de force*, erudite and eminently readable, with plenty of provocative new ideas and proposals.

### SUMMARY

The thesis that Römer advances as a compromise has the Deuteronomistic History evolve in 3 stages: the reign of Josiah in the Neo-Assyrian period of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the experience of the exile in the Neo-Babylonian period of the sixth century, and the Persian period, all of which are represented in different periscopes of Deuteronomy 12.

He locates the first stage under Josiah, reasoning that an earlier point is impossible based on the assumption of the development of the monarchic state of Judah only in the eighth century and the limitation of writing at that time to elites. In addition, he notes the identification of the book of the law found under Josiah with Deuteronomy and designates the story in 2 Kings 22–23 as the foundation myth of Deuteronomism, though he places the composition of the story in the Persian period. Extending an olive branch to Norbert Lohfink, Römer sees the first stage of the Deuteronomistic History not as a single literary work but as separate scrolls from the library of the Deuteronomistic school, meaning by “school” “a (small) group of authors, redactors or compilers who share the same ideology and the same rhetoric and stylistic techniques” (p. 47). The scrolls in this library had in common the propagandistic function of supporting centralized political and religious reforms under Josiah. Among them Römer adduces: (1) a collection of laws underlying Deuteronomy 12–25 + the curses in ch. 28; (2) a conquest account behind Joshua 3–12 that advanced Josiah’s territorial claims especially to Benjamin; and (3) a chronicle of the kings of Judah beneath Samuel-Kings that legitimated the Davidic dynasty and cast Josiah as David *redivivus*.

It was only at Römer’s second stage, in the Babylonian exile, that the Deuteronomistic *History*, per se, as a single literary work encompassing Deuteronomy – Kings arose. This was the product of a group of Jerusalem elites now in Babylon. In Weberian terms, they were Mandarins, that is, once high officials, who dealt with the crisis of the exile by constructing a narrative history that attempted to account for the breakdown of social structures—in a word, crisis literature. Their explanation for the crisis of the exile was Israel’s and Judah’s past disobedience to Yahweh and the Mosaic law. They structured their narrative history according to the speeches of major characters, beginning with those of Deuteronomy’s Moses, who



is made the prototypical prophet and intercessor, a role usually ascribed to kings but one in which the kings of Israel and Judah had proven failures.

The foundation myth of this second stage and the theme binding all of the exilic Deuteronomistic History together was the myth of the empty land, which located the true people of Yahweh in Babylon. The exilic Deuteronomists retooled the principle of centralization in their Josianic *Vorlage* of Deuteronomy so that its main purpose became preparing for the violation of centralization in the subsequent story in Joshua – Kings, leading inevitably to exile. Among the most important additions at this stage were Deuteronomy 1–3\* and 5\*, where the Decalogue served as a sort of table of contents to the laws in Deuteronomy, and Deuteronomy 34, where Moses’ death outside of the land was significant for the exiles. The conquest account in Joshua was altered from a propagandistic claim to Benjaminite territory into a story of the conquest of the whole land, which already contained a warning about its loss. The Babylonian Deuteronomists invented the period of the judges, drawing on an older *Retterbuch*, to contrast the series of charismatic, successful judges with the unstable monarchy to follow. In the Babylonian Deuteronomistic History, Samuel was the 12<sup>th</sup> judge, the material in Judges 13–21 coming in later. The Babylonian Deuteronomists were ambivalent toward the monarchy (1 Sam 8–12) and uncertain about its future (the end of Kings). They presented Saul, David, and Solomon as three archetypal kings, Saul representing the Northern kingdom, David the ideal Southern king, and Solomon the reality of most of the southern kings and the cause of the problems with the monarchy.

The third stage of the Deuteronomistic History in the early Persian period focused predominately on the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua and was preoccupied with 3 main ideological concerns: (1) segregation of the Golah community from the “people of the land” (reflecting a change in meaning of *‘am ha’ares*) and including the interdiction of intermarriage; (2) monotheism, limited mostly to Deuteronomy and especially visible in such texts as Deuteronomy 4 and 10:14–22, where it is connected with election; and (3) the integration of Jews living outside of Yehud, whereby exile is transformed into diaspora. Thus, in the Persian period redaction of 2 Kings 22–23, the sacrificial cult is replaced by the reading of Torah. Also, the Succession Narrative and the account of Manasseh’s reign were augmented at this stage in order to depict the Davidic line negatively and counter messianic expectations linked to Zerubbabel.

In the latter Persian period, ca. 400, according to Römer’s reconstruction, the Deuteronomistic History disappeared as an entity, giving way to the Torah. The compromise between Priestly and Deuteronomistic schools that produced the Torah is symbol-

lized in Ezra. There was some disagreement as to whether the Torah should be represented in the form of a Pentateuch or a Hexateuch. But in the end the violent conquest of the land under Joshua was considered too provocative in the Achaemenid context, and the work ended with Moses' death outside of the land. In the remainder of the Persian period and beyond, a great deal of other material was added to the Former Prophets, but not from a Deuteronomistic perspective. Such additions include: the Rahab story (Josh 2), the speech in Josh 24, the introduction to Judges in 1:1–2:5, the tales of Jephthah and Samson (in the Hellenistic period), the stories in Judg 17–21, the miscellany in 2 Sam 21–24, and the Elijah-Elisha tales.

### CRITIQUE

Römer deserves our deepest gratitude for advancing the discussion of the Deuteronomistic History to a new level. He moves, by and large, beyond the usual process of making source-critical observations and then proposing historical settings for them to a synthesis of yes, source-critical analyses, but also form-critical and social-scientific data to venture reconstructions of the groups and contexts that produced these documents—their foundation myths and their political and ideological motives. The works in our field that often have the greatest impact are not the ones that put forward brand new data or propositions but those that synthesize previous work into an integrated whole. That is what Römer offers us. In a sense, there is little if anything here that is absolutely brand new. Multiple Deuteronomistic editions; a Josianic beginning, especially of Deuteronomy; a national, narrative history following the Babylonian exile; subsequent, significant augmentation—all of these pieces have been on the table for some time. Römer has assembled them into a single model with a few extra pieces and additional adhesive borrowed from the social sciences.

Notwithstanding this important contribution, there are a number of features of Römer's model where questions remain or where his assembly raises further questions and where I would challenge him at least to offer us further explanation. In good biblical fashion, I have isolated seven of these. I present them essentially in the order in which one encounters the relevant issues in his book.

First, his ascription of the Deuteronomistic History to a school of scribes traversing centuries begs for an analogous parallel. Where can one find a comparable school of writers? What social-scientific evidence exists for such a phenomenon? Noth's notion of a Deuteronomist unaffiliated with any institution may well be anachronistic, as Römer argues. But that alone does not negate the possibility of an individual writer. One of Römer's main complaints about the "Neo-Nothians" who continue to advocate indi-

vidual authorship is that the post-Deuteronomistic additions they adduce lack precise location and “float in limbo.” But much the same thing can be said about Römer’s own set of post-Deuteronomistic additions, many of which are the same as the Neo-Nothians’, and which Römer assigns to a hodgepodge of writers with various motives that are disconnected and sometimes unclear.

Second, what is the necessity for locating the story of Josiah’s finding the book of the law in 2 Kings 22–23 as a foundation myth so much later than its setting—i.e., in the Persian period rather than the seventh century? The distance undermines the point of the motif. If reforms were enacted under Josiah and an Ur-Deuteronomy furnishing the guidelines for the reforms was written, why would the story of the book finding not stem from the late seventh century? Indeed, why could Josiah or his handlers not have made use of this motif? The only reason I can see is the attempt to seek greater separation between Deuteronomy and Kings in support of a theory along the lines of Lohfink’s DtrL.

Third, the Babylonian Deuteronomists are said to have identified the promised land as the territory west of the Jordan as an accommodation to the territorial repartition of the land by the Babylonians (p. 134). But then they are also said to have enlarged Joshua’s conquest to the south and north for ideological reasons (pp. 135–36). In other words, according to this reconstruction, the same Deuteronomists make opposite moves for different reasons; they both reduce and augment the land. Granted that there may be tension between motives of ideology and historical accommodation, to what extent does this example illustrate the tenuous nature of relying on such criteria for redaction-critical purposes, i.e., for trying to determine the intent and social/historical setting of the purported redactor(s)?

Fourth, Römer readily accepts the existence of a Northern *Rechterbuch* used by the exilic Deuteronomists to create the period of the judges. He is relying here on the work of predecessors, so these questions may be a bit unfair. Still, they go to larger issues of his reconstruction. Such a book would have to date from the eighth century at the latest. But then, what does such a book imply about literacy rates in the North? Would it have been connected with elites, and if so, why would they wish to preserve such stories? Most of all, how would the answers to these questions impact the data and assumptions about literacy in Judah upon which elements of this reconstruction are based?

Fifth, the David material seems to be particularly amorphous in this reconstruction, or to borrow Römer’s own terms—“floating in limbo.” Basically, pro-David material is assigned to the Josianic level and anti-David material to the Babylonian. But this begs many questions: Were the History of David’s Rise (hereafter HDR) and

the Court History/Succession Narrative (hereafter CH/SN) ever distinct documents? If so, what was their form and nature? If not, how does one account for their stylistic coherence (especially of the CH/SN) observed by other scholars? And how does one determine what is pro-David and what is anti-David? There are certain clear cases, like the Bathsheba story, but so much of the David material is ambiguous. If the HDR is mostly a pro-David piece of propaganda, why not the material in the SN as well? It can certainly be read as propaganda that is apologetic for David and/or his dynasty.

Sixth, the Persian period level is the least thoroughgoing of the three levels in Römer's reconstruction. He seems to acknowledge the difficulty associated with assigning material to this level when he notes that the Persian period is "the most obscure era in the history of Palestine" (p. 166) and that "there is no direct allusion to the Persian period in the whole Deuteronomistic History" (p. 178). Given the difficulties in drawing redaction-critical conclusions on the basis of ideology, suggested by question #3 above, one wonders whether the attempt to find a systematic revision of the Deuteronomistic History in the Persian period is motivated more by present trends in scholarship than by compelling evidence. This is not to deny the likelihood of additions that may have been made in the Persian period, but it is to question the presence of a actual layer of redaction, particularly if that layer is to be identified as Deuteronomistic. Consider, for instance, two of the main tenets of the Persian Deuteronomists in Römer's reconstruction: the Golah community as the true people of God and the movement toward diaspora. It seems difficult on the surface to imagine two positions more alien to that of centralization, so in what sense do these different positions cohere as "Deuteronomistic?"

Seventh, finally, regarding the "great compromise" of the Priestly and Deuteronomistic schools that led to the Pentateuch, can it be clarified? What was the reason for such a compromise? What is the understanding of the social entities of the groups that negotiated it? Where were they? Beyond the recognition that both a Pentateuch and a Hexateuch may be said to exist, there is a great deal about this reconstruction that is quite unclear and seems speculative. This is not really a criticism of Römer's work—no one has yet completely convincingly explained these phenomena. It is rather a challenge not to neglect the very social-scientific questions and parallels that he has raised for the Deuteronomistic History.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTE

During the session at the meeting, it seemed to me that we on the panel were sometimes talking past each other—that is, that we were sometimes more in agreement than we realized. In the spirit at bridging and compromise, I wish to point out that Römer and I agree on many particulars concerning the Deuteronomistic History.

We agree, first of all, that there was a Deuteronomistic History, a single running history of Israel encompassing the books of Deuteronomy – Kings. We agree that this work took its essential form in the Babylonian exile, but that its writer(s) made use of earlier sources in shaping their history at that time and that the figure of Josiah and materials from his reign were significant in that process. We agree further that there were extensive additions of a diverse nature added to the Babylonian history in the later exilic, Persian, and even Hellenistic periods. There are other points of agreement, but these are enough to show that we concur on the basic contours of the Deuteronomistic History. As we continue to discuss our differences of opinion, perhaps we do well to keep in mind the large measure to which we agree.

**DEUTERONOMY BETWEEN THE  
PENTATEUCH AND THE  
DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: SOME  
REMARKS ABOUT THOMAS RÖMER, *THE  
SO-CALLED DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY***

ECKART OTTO  
LUDWIG MAXIMILIANS UNIVERSITÄT,  
MUNICH, GERMANY

The “Yahwist” and with him the “Elohist” are gone. The source-theory of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century has come to a definite end. From Julius Wellhausen on there always remained one problem, which W. M. L. De Wette could solve but not Julius Wellhausen and Abraham Kuenen and the myriad of their followers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and which at the end was responsible for the break-down of one hundred years of Wellhausian documentary hypothesis: If the Priestly Code (P; Genesis 1–Leviticus 16) was later than the book of Deuteronomy (D), why do we not find P in D, as we find it in Genesis and Exodus, and supplements of P (P<sup>s</sup>) in Leviticus, even if some try to find P in three or four verses in Deuteronomy 1 and Deuteronomy 34? Several scholars already proved very convincingly that there was not a single word of P in Deuteronomy at all. For De Wette this was no problem because for him D was the latest literary part of the Pentateuch, later than P. When Wellhausen and Kuenen turned this order round the *captivitas Babylonica* of the book of Deuteronomy began—i.e., its isolation from the Tetrateuch—and the question did not find a convincing answer to how the book of Deuteronomy became part of the Pentateuch. The final point isolating the book of Deuteronomy from the rest of the Pentateuch was Martin Noth’s hypothesis of a Deuteronomistic History from Deuteronomy 1 to 2 Kings 25. Thomas Römer’s book marks a preliminary point of a radical revision of this hypothesis, which was far too unsophisticated for really explaining the literary history of the books of the Former Prophets, which was to a degree the consequence of Wellhausen’s isolation of the book of Deuteronomy from the rest of the Pentateuch. One of the decisive aspects, which caused the revisions, was the insight that there

was already a Deuteronomistic History in the late preexilic time of King Josiah, an insight we owe especially to American scholars. But more and more European scholars and among them Römer follow this insight. The next point which needed revision was the position of Deuteronomy in the literary history of the Deuteronomistic History by the insight that there was already a preexilic Deuteronomistic History in 1 Sam 1:1–2 Kgs 23:25\*. So OT scholarship is at the moment in a situation of radical changes especially with respect to the pillars of the Wellhausen documentary hypothesis, on the one hand, and Noth's theory of an exilic Deuteronomistic History, on the other. The literary history of the book of Deuteronomy is the decisive key in this change because of its importance for the literary history of the Pentateuch and of the Former Prophets. This need for revision of any theory of a Deuteronomistic History was the reason why Römer called his monograph a study about the "so-called Deuteronomistic History." He is aware of the necessity of revision. He dissolved the Deuteronomistic History in the preexilic period as a literary unit from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings and is of opinion that there were different scrolls of a preexilic Deuteronomy including the centralization-laws, of the book of Joshua and of sources of the books of Judges, Samuel and especially Kings, which were not directly literarily connected to each other by a coherent literary framework, but were independent from each other. But they took part in the same religious ideology of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. If Römer supposes that they were part of one and the same library, one may question this, but it is an interesting idea. The result remains valid that they were written in the same time and influenced by the same "deuteronomistic" ideology without forming one literary unit. It is not necessary to stress the fact that Römer is entirely right when he keeps to the fact that this theology of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE was deeply influenced by Neo-Assyrian motives including the vassal treaty of Esarhaddon, which the Judean scribes refused, so that I spoke of a "subversive reception."<sup>9</sup> This thesis of an ideological affinity and literary independence at the same time can solve some basic problems in the reconstruction of the literary history of the book of Deuteronomy. The preexilic book of Deuteronomy in Deuteronomy 12–26\*; 28\* introduced by Deut 6:4–5 had no frame connecting it with Moses at Mount Horeb and in the land of Moab. These were deuteronomistic ideas of the "exilic" period, so that Deuteronomy 1–3 could not function as the introduction of a preexilic Deuteronomistic History from Deuteronomy 1 to 2 Kings 23\*. But without Deuteronomy

---

<sup>9</sup> For my review of T. Römer's monograph see Eckart Otto, "Zur Geschichte der deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke. Anmerkungen zu einem neuen Entwurf von Thomas Römer," *ZA(B)/R* 12 (2006), 354–361.

1–3 such a Deuteronomistic History could not function. If we agree to Römer's perspective that the deuteronomistic scrolls of the preexilic period were originally independent literary units, then the question becomes central how these scrolls grew together and became a literary unit. At this point Römer remains rather near to Noth, for whom as for Römer the formation of a Deuteronomistic History from Deuteronomy 1 to 2 Kings 25 was an exilic endeavour. But again the literary history of the book of Deuteronomy contradicts this solution. The basic literary layer of Deuteronomy 1–3 was part of the deuteronomistic book of Deuteronomy, and was intensively connected also with the book of Joshua, but not with the other books of the Former Prophets, which contradicts the assumption that these chapters in Deuteronomy 1–3 were the introduction to an exilic Deuteronomistic History from Deuteronomy 1 to 2 Kings 25. And even the postexilic literary supplements of Deuteronomy 1–3 which integrated the book of Deuteronomy into the Hexateuch and Pentateuch correlated the book of Deuteronomy with the Tetrateuch in Genesis-Numbers and also again with the book of Joshua but not with the other books of the Former Prophets.<sup>10</sup> The deuteronomistic book of Deuteronomy was connected with the likewise deuteronomistic book of Joshua by the exilic Moab-redaction in Deuteronomy 1–3\*; 29–30\* forming a literary corpus of Deuteronomy 1–Joshua 23; (Judg 2:6–9\*). In the postexilic period the deuteronomistic books of Deuteronomy and Joshua were connected with the Priestly Code (P) in Genesis 1–Leviticus 16 forming the Hexateuch, which had no literary contact with the exilic Deuteronomistic History in 1 Samuel 1–2 Kings 25.

A strong point in Römer's monograph is his perspective that the book of Deuteronomy was not only revised in the exilic period by the Deuteronomists but also in the postexilic period and not only in Deuteronomy 12\* but also in Deuteronomy 7\* and other chapters of Deuteronomy. After scholars had detected the deuteronomistic Deuteronomy as a revision of the preexilic deuteronomistic Deuteronomy more than twenty years ago,<sup>11</sup> we have to realize now that there was also an intensive postexilic revision of Deuteronomy. But, and this is a decisive point, it was no longer a deuteronomistic revision that we encounter in this postexilic revision of Deuteronomy, but an integration of this book into the literary con-

---

<sup>10</sup> For a survey of research on Deuteronomy 1–3 and an exegetical analysis of these chapters, see Eckart Otto, "Deuteronomium 1–3 als Schlüssel der Pentateuchkritik in diachroner und synchroner Lektüre," *Die Tora. Studien zum Pentateuch* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte, 9; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 284–420.

<sup>11</sup> See H. D. Preuss, *Deuteronomium* (Erträge der Forschung, 164; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982).



text of a Hexateuch and Pentateuch.<sup>12</sup> At this point it is necessary to talk about terminology. We find purely deuteronomistic terminology also in the MT-expansions of the book of Jeremiah and even in postbiblical literature, so that we must speak of a deuteronomistic cliché-language, which is far beyond any deuteronomistic literature. This makes it necessary to find better criteria than just the deuteronomistic language, which can only be one aspect. In the Pentateuch we speak of deuteronomistic texts, where P is not yet presupposed, but texts which presuppose P we call postdeuteronomistic. This means that texts like Deut 14:3–20, which Römer dates postexilic, are no longer deuteronomistic texts and not part of a Deuteronomistic History, but a postdeuteronomistic revision of Leviticus 11<sup>13</sup> and part of the revision of the book of Deuteronomy in the horizon of the postexilic Pentateuch.

Römer has some difficulties in explaining how the book of Deuteronomy was transferred from Deuteronomistic History to the Pentateuch and became its keystone. Under the superscript “The Death of the Deuteronomistic History and the Birth of the Torah” he very briefly develops the theory that in the process of a Pentateuch-redaction the book of Deuteronomy was cut off from Deuteronomistic History and expanded by Deuteronomy 27; 32–33:

This transformation of the book of Deuteronomy was the end of the Deuteronomistic History. From now on Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings became what later will be called the ‘Former Prophets.’ There was still editing on these books but no more in a Deuteronomistic perspective (182).

But why the authors of the Torah killed the Deuteronomistic History by swallowing the book of Deuteronomy remains a mystery and this means that the main question of how the Torah and the Former Prophets were literary-historically related to each other remains open at the end of the monograph. But some hints should be given. In the Deuteronomistic History we find only in 1 Sam 1–2 Kgs, whereas the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua became part of a postexilic Hexateuch, which became the Pentateuch by

---

<sup>12</sup> See Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium in Pentateuch und Hexateuch. Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumrahmens* (FAT, 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); Eckart Otto, *Das Gesetz des Mose* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007); Eckart Otto, “The Pivotal Meaning of Pentateuch Research for a History of Israelite and Jewish Religion and Society,” J. Le Roux and Eckart Otto (eds), *South African Perspectives on the Pentateuch Between Synchrony and Diachrony* (LHBOTS, 463; New York/London: T&T Clark, 2007), 29–53.

<sup>13</sup> See Eckart Otto, “Das Buch Levitikus zwischen Priesterschrift und Pentateuch,” *Die Tora*, 119–122.

cutting off the book of Joshua at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Together with P the book of Deuteronomy was the “cradle” of the Hexateuch and Pentateuch. Later in the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Pentateuch was still expanded by cultic insertions especially in the book of Numbers.<sup>14</sup>

Only after the book of Joshua was cut off from the Pentateuch the book of Judges was inserted to close the gap between the books of Joshua and Samuel, but it was transmitted up to them independent as one of the “scrolls” going back in its core sections to the preexilic period.<sup>15</sup> After the authors of the Pentateuch-redaction finished the Pentateuch, some brackets (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:41–45, 55–61; 2 Kgs 17:34, 37\*) were inserted,<sup>16</sup> which connected the Torah with the Former Prophets so that the Torah functioned as the foundation for the application found in the Former Prophets. Therefore, the Enneateuch was a phenomenon of the post-pentateuchal process of canon formation.<sup>17</sup> If we sum up the literary history of Pentateuch and Former Prophets,<sup>18</sup> we get the impression that in the preexilic period the higher literary productivity occurred in the books of the Former Prophets, especially in Samuel and Kings where we find the first preexilic Deuteronomistic History of the Josianic period. On the side of the Pentateuch there existed in that period only a collection of stories of the Patriarchs, a Moses-Exodus-narrative, the Covenant Code, and its revision in the preexilic book of Deuteronomy. The pentateuchal literature did not develop its literary dynamics until the “exilic” period by the formation of the deuteronomistic books of Deuteronomy and Joshua, on the one hand, and the Priestly Code, on the other, and got its power of literary dynamics especially in the postexilic period by forming the Hexateuch and Pentateuch out of the exilic pro-

---

<sup>14</sup> See the literature in n. 12 and R. Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora. Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte, 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> That the book of Judges came into the context of the Former Prophets in the postexilic period does not mean that there was no preexilic material in the stories of the “charismatic leaders.”

<sup>16</sup> See R. Achenbach, “Pentateuch, Hexateuch, Enneateuch. Eine Verhältnisbestimmung,” *ZA(B)R* 11 (2005), 122–154; Eckart Otto, “Ein ‘Deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk’ im Enneateuch?” *Die Tora*, 601–619.

<sup>17</sup> In the process of early canon-formation Moses’ song and its framework in Deuteronomy 31–32 has an important function; see Eckart Otto, “Moses Abschiedslied in Deuteronomium 32. Ein Zeugnis der Kanonsbildung in der Hebräischen Bibel,” *Die Tora*, 641–678.

<sup>18</sup> See Eckart Otto, “Pentateuch und Vordere Propheten,” R. Achenbach, M. Arneth, Eckart Otto (eds), *Einführung in die Literaturgeschichte der Hebräischen Bibel* (Tübingen; Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

grams of P and D. As Römer makes clear, the postexilic literary history on the side of the Deuteronomistic History in the postexilic period remained less productive compared to that of the Pentateuch. When the Torah “swallowed” the books of the Former Prophets it was only in the process of canon formation after the Pentateuch had already been finished.

I wish to conclude these comments with a kind of *memento* for the organizers of the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic History sections of SBL: They should hand in hand concentrate on the book of Deuteronomy, because it is the key for the literary history of the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets.

## THE BOOK OF JUDGES: FRUIT OF 100 YEARS OF CREATIVITY

YAIRAH AMIT  
TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY,  
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Reading Römer's book strengthens the view that the "so-called Deuteronomistic History" is not a failed, obsolete theory, but it is still very much alive, though not in the way Noth presented it in the middle of the past century.<sup>19</sup> From the point of view of an influential theory, Römer's book is a song of praise to Noth's theory: "Whatever the possible interactions between Noth's own social and political context and his presentation of the Deuteronomistic History may be,<sup>20</sup> they do not necessarily affect *the validity of the Deuteronomistic History hypothesis itself* [my emphasis]. Yet they may help to understand some of the major modifications, which this hypothesis was soon to undergo, and to situate them ... in the context of Western intellectual history in the second half of the twentieth century" (p. 25). And I might add—the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Following Noth, for Römer as for many others, the Deuteronomistic History is not merely an invented term of modern biblical scholarship, but one that represents a substance, the substance being the literary product of a well-planned and comprehensive historical work, which includes the books from Deuteronomy to Kings. On the other hand, following the modifications of the last 40 years, Römer is convinced that the vitality of this theory depends on its modifications, which took it to a more complicated direction. In light of these modifications, the Deuteronomistic History is no longer the product of a coherent and unified redaction by an individual editor-author-historian, who witnessed the fall of Judah, Jerusalem and its temple, and wanted to understand the

---

<sup>19</sup> Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup, 15; Sheffield, 1981); translation of the first part of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien. Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (1943) (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1967).

<sup>20</sup> Römer's wording hints at Noth's situation in World War II.

reasons for these catastrophes and whether or not history had any meaning. For Römer and for most scholars today, the Deuteronomistic History is the product of the creative Deuteronomistic School, which existed for almost 200 years—from the Assyrian period to the Persian period (7th to 5th centuries BCE)—having formed first in the kingdom of Judah, then in the Babylonian exile, and finally in the province of Yehud.

In this book Römer's main interest is to present his modifications to Noth's theory. After describing Noth's theory and its background (pp. 1–25), and after reviewing the main modifications to this theory and their valuable insights (pp. 26–43), he offers everyone, scholars and students alike, the best informed, up to date, short, practical and readable introduction to the Deuteronomistic History. The book's added value is the presentation of his own model, the threefold edition of the Deuteronomistic History—namely, the description of three main redaction layers corresponding to three distinct social, political, and historical contexts: the Assyrian, the Babylonian and the Persian periods (pp. 45–183).

My paper focuses on the first period, when Judah was under Assyrian occupation, and in this context I examine the case of the book of Judges, which in my view calls for some modifications in Römer's model.

In the light of Römer's description of the Deuteronomistic History, the book of Judges gives rise to a question about the materials which could belong to the end of the 8th century BCE—that is, after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, in the reigns of Hezekiah and his son Manasseh.<sup>21</sup> This assumes that such materials could exist in late 8th century Judah and thus precedes the beginning of history writing in Judah. It also changes and widens the limits of the description of Römer's Assyrian period and depicts the 100 years between the fall of the northern kingdom and Josiah's renovation of the Temple as 100 years of literary creativity which include writing history, rather than 100 years of silence and literary paralysis. In other words, if, as Römer says, “the end of the seventh century offers the most plausible historical setting for the emergence of Deuteronomistic literature” (p. 69), then, I would argue, that the end of the 8th century in Judah offers the most plausible historical setting for the emergence of the pre-Deuteronomistic literature with its early historiography. This literature contended with the new historical circumstances (direct connection with the Assyrian empire, the fall of the northern kingdom,

---

<sup>21</sup> See Yairah Amit, “Epilogue and Hypothesis Regarding Time and Place of Editing,” *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 358–383; Yairah Amit, *History and Ideology: An Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 20–41.

new inhabitants in Jerusalem, the siege of Sennacherib with all its consequences), which produced a new spiritual activity about which we learn from the writings of the 8th century rebuking prophets.

It is reasonable to assume that these new prophetic ideas and messages were not hidden and kept in a drawer for 100 years, but influenced the intellectuals of the time—namely, the scribes, the priests and the ministers. These pre-Deuteronomistic scribes were engaged with copying, for example the materials “which the men of king Hezekiah of Judah copied” (Prov 25:1), with preserving the materials that came from the north, such as Hosea’s prophecies, and materials of local prophets, such as the prophecies of Amos and Isaiah and others. As I see it, they were also engaged with writing history, and an early edition of the book of Judges, based on a collection of stories about northern “saviours,” was part of this pre-Deuteronomistic literature, which was the early and imperative condition of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School. I accept Römer’s view that at a later time this edition was reworked by the scribes of the Deuteronomistic School in order to complete the Deuteronomistic History. The difference between our positions concerns the activity of the Judahite intellectuals in the 100 years before the emergence of the Deuteronomistic School, which indeed developed on the basis of the pre-Deuteronomistic materials, including historical writings, a comprehensive, integrated, deep and detailed ideology.

Summing up Römer’s approach to Judges, I reflect on four issues:

1) Römer states that “there is behind the present book of Judges a collection of accounts about Israelite ‘Saviours’ originating from the Northern kingdom.” (p. 91).

2) He is aware that “*The book of Judges presents scarce Deuteronomistic editorial activity*, which sometimes differs considerably from the Deuteronomistic redactions of the foregoing and following books.” (pp. 71–72 [my emphasis]). Twenty pages later he adds: “*Judges is the book within the Former Prophets, which has the fewest typically Deuteronomistic passages*,” and when he counts these passages he points to only three texts: “Judg 2:6–3:6, 6:1–10,<sup>22</sup> 10:6–16.” (pp. 90–91 [my emphasis]).

3) Römer’s reasoning leading to his conclusion about the late exilic dating of Judges rests on the consensus that the few Deuteronomistic passages “are *generally regarded* as rather late compositions” (pp. 90–91 [my emphasis]), and “cannot therefore be attributed to the royal scribes at the end of the seventh century.” (p.

---

<sup>22</sup> Although it is written: “Judg. 6:11–18,” I assume this is simply a printing mistake and originally it was: Judg 6:1–10 or 6:7–10.

91). Another argument for the late dating is: “*there is no conclusive reason to attribute any of the Deuteronomistic redaction in the book of Judges to the time of Josiah*” (71–72 [my emphasis]).

4) The explanation for the need of the Deuteronomists in the Babylonian period to edit the almost forgotten northern saviors scroll was, as Römer argues: “to create an intermediate period between the origins (Deuteronomy-Joshua) and the history of the monarchy (Samuel-Kings).” (p. 137). Hence he is convinced that “this period (of the judges) is nothing other than a literary invention of the Deuteronomistic school.” (p. 136).

I agree with Römer that behind the extant book of Judges there is a collection of stories about northern heroes, because all the judges— except the editorial passage on Othniel— are from the north; I agree with him that the book of Judges has few Deuteronomistic characteristics; I also agree that the term “the days of the judges” is a late editorial expression, and that is why we cannot find it in Judges and only in later texts, such as 2 Kings 23:22 and Ruth 1:1.

But I disagree that the pre-monarchic period is an invention, because something happened in the mountains of Canaan before the upland population decided to unite and to appoint a king; and I disagree with the system that even when a text has only few Deuteronomistic characteristics, it is still viewed as a late Deuteronomistic one, because it is “generally regarded” as such, or because “there is no conclusive reason to attribute” the text to an earlier period.

As for “the criteria of defining a text as ‘Deuteronomistic’,” Römer declares: “The only way to avoid arbitrary definitions is to combine stylistic and ideological criteria” (pp. 33–34).<sup>23</sup> Now, as he himself admits, the stylistic criterion does not work in Judges, because of the “fewest typically Deuteronomistic passages” (p.90), so that we are left with the ideological criterion, which indicates that the book is not yet Deuteronomistic, but pre-Deuteronomistic. To prove this, I will focus on the fact that significant ideas of Deuteronomy are absent in Judges, although the book provides opportunities for them.

#### **THE CENTRALIZATION OF THE CULT**

This idea, a central one in the Deuteronomistic world-view,<sup>24</sup> is completely absent from the book of Judges, without so much as an apologetic hint, as in 1 Kings 3:2. Even the idea of a chosen, single location, which might change or migrate, as happens in the book of Joshua, is nowhere hinted at in Judges. I tend to assume, therefore,

<sup>23</sup> See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 1–3 and especially Appendix A, 320–359.

<sup>24</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 1–5 and more.

that the early authors/editors of Judges were still unfamiliar with the demand to centralize the cult.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the book of Judges innocently depicts a legitimate cult carried out in “high places” owned by families and local communities. The book objects only to high places in which other deities are worshipped, such as the altar of Gideon’s father to Baal (6:25–32).

### THE ATTITUDE TOWARD PROPHECY AND PROPHETS

At the center of the Deuteronomistic literature is a figure of a prophet (Moses, Joshua) or prophets (Ahijah, Huldah and many others), who are responsible for the connection between the deity and his people, according to the divine promise in Deut 18:18: “I will raise them up a prophet from among their own people” (see also Deut 18:15). This promise is fulfilled throughout the book of Kings, in which history is shown as a fulfilment of prophecy.<sup>26</sup> In the book of Judges, by contrast, the depiction of the prophet as a national leader, or as a mediator between the people and the deity, has not yet matured. Throughout the book there are direct encounters between the human and the divine, as in the form of an angel of God who appears, for example, to Gideon (6:11–28) and to Samson’s parents (13:2–25), or when God himself chastises the people (10:11–15). Even the mediator-prophet, Deborah, does not prevent God’s direct intervention in the war. The one example of a rebuking prophet (6:8–10) is absent from the Qumran version (4Q Judges<sup>a</sup>), which may therefore be regarded as a late secondary addition. Thus, in contrast to Deuteronomistic literature, the book of Judges does not yet know about distancing the deity from the human stage to his heavenly abode and about the role of rebuking prophets.

### THE CONCEPT OF TWELVE TRIBES

The Deuteronomistic school described Israel as consisting of twelve tribes: Moses sends out twelve scouts, one from each tribe (Deut 1:23), and in the blessing and cursing ceremony the tribes are divided into two sets of six (Deut 27:12–13). This numerical structure, which is utilized by the priestly editors too, is foreign to the book of Judges. The Song of Deborah (Judg 5), an opportunity to list all the tribes, names only ten.<sup>27</sup> Even the book’s first introduc-

---

<sup>25</sup> Y. Kaufman, *The Book of Judges – A Commentary* (Jerusalem: 1962 [Hebrew], 30–31) emphasizes that the absence of any hint about centralization of the cult in Judges is a proof that the book was not influenced by Deuteronomy.

<sup>26</sup> See Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (Studies in Biblical Theology, 9; trans. D. Stalker, London: SCM Press, 1953), 78ff.

<sup>27</sup> Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali, Reuben, Dan,



tion (Judg 1:1–2:5) names Judah and Simeon as against the seven northern tribes—a total of nine tribes. Nowhere in the book of Judges is there a full complement of twelve tribes—with the single exception of the story of the concubine in Gibeah, which deviates from the rest of the book in its late language, and is in any case presented as an appendix.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the effort to find twelve judges is exegetical and forced.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the depiction of Israel as consisting of twelve tribes is still foreign to Judges.

### THE CONCEPT OF CYCLIC HISTORY

Both as a defining idea and as a structure, the book of Judges is characterized by the cyclic principle. This can be demonstrated in conditions of compassion and response, or willingness to overlook repeated sinning. Such a concept is alien to the strict approach of the Deuteronomist, who regards the worship of other gods as inevitably leading to destruction, annihilation and even loss of the land (Deut 4:26 and elsewhere). Significantly, the authors/editors of the book of Kings employ this concept only once, to describe the reign of Jehoahaz son of Jehu (2 Kings 13:1–9), but being a single example it is devoid of the cyclic quality. However, to explain the continuity of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah these authors/editors utilize, on the one hand, the divine promise to David, as opposed to the changing dynasties in Israel and their annihilation, and on the other hand, they develop the ideas of rebuking prophets, of accumulating sin, and of leading sinners like Ahab and Manasseh.

Moreover, in the book of Judges, the expressions reflecting the cyclic pattern of sin, punishment, outcry and deliverance as they appear in the stories (but not in 2:11–19) do not represent the Deuteronomistic language, because some of them are unique to the book (for example “and the land had peace for X years”), while others may be found in 8th century prophets, like “cry out to me” (in Hos 7:14, 8:2). Even the expression “other gods” and the idea that worshipping other gods is the very worst sin were the innovation of the 8th century prophet Hosea (3:1), to whom the idea of devotion to God was predominant, as part of his adultery metaphors, and were not of the Deuteronomist’s. Hence the attribution of cyclicity to the Deuteronomistic vocabulary rests on the axi-

---

Asher, Manasseh, who is represented by Machir, and Gad, who is represented by Gilead.

<sup>28</sup> See Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 337–357 and Cynthia Edenburg, *The Story of the Outrage at Gibeah (Jdg. 19–21): Composition, Sources and Historical Context* (Ph.D. diss., Tel Aviv University, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> See Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 39–40.

omatic notion that only a Deuteronomist could have conceived of cyclicity.

These examples demonstrate that uniquely Deuteronomistic concepts are still foreign to the book of Judges, nor do they appear in it by contradistinction or allusion. No wonder that works composed after the appearance of the Deuteronomistic literature contain echoes of its ideas, by way of adoption, adaptation or confrontation. Since no such echoes can be found in the book of Judges, it may be stated that the bulk of the book, except a number of interventions by late editors, belongs to a generation that did not yet know Deuteronomy, its ideas and style.

### **WHO COMPOSED THE BOOK OF JUDGES AND WHY?**

It would seem that the book was composed by Judahite scribes who served probably in the king's court, where conditions were suitable for writing. However, the work was not designed to serve royal needs. These scribes worked on it in their "leisure hours," when they were free from the tasks of the kingdom, and were under the influence of prophets or literate ministers and priests, who were seeking answers to substantive questions, which this book meant to provide.

These questions included the following: Can historical events be understood? Is it possible to define the laws governing history and to explain the fall of the Northern kingdom? How can Judah avoid a similar fate? Whence do foreign kings, such as the king of Assyria, draw their power? When will an end come to the superior might of the foreign kings? What kind of leadership is needed? Can historical events be understood? Is it possible to define the laws governing history and to explain the fall of the Northern kingdom? How can Judah avoid a similar fate? Whence do foreign kings, such as the king of Assyria, draw their power? When will an end come to the superior might of the foreign kings? What kind of leadership is needed?

The book is, in fact, a Judahite indictment against the Northern kingdom and explains its destruction. It suggests by the use of cyclicity that the northern society was a serial sinner. The Judahite imprint may be found in the editorial passages that highlight the contrast between Israel and Judah, such as the first introduction to the book (Judg 1:1–36) and the formulaic depiction of the first judge, Othniel, as a Judahite leader with excellent national perception, which leads him to take on a distant northern enemy (Judg 3:7–11).

Cyclicity serves the description of the Israelites as repeated offenders and of their leaders' unsatisfactory influence. This description of the instability during the time of the judges may have been inspired by the instability of the Israelite kingdom with its succession of dynasties. Furthermore, the Assyrian dominion taught the

Judahite authors the importance of loyalty to the supreme ruler, which they interpreted as avoiding the worship of alien gods. The criticism of the time of judges from a Judahite perspective was an attempt by a society that had not been deported to avoid an anticipated blow. Studying the long-gone period of the judges as a test-case enabled them to learn God's considerations, to understand His moves, and thus to draw conclusions about their own time.

Thus, it seems to me that the book of Judges is the first attempt at writing history as a way of understanding God's moves. It was meant to answer the needs of the intellectuals, who were not necessarily at court (prophets and priests). The work was born from the events of the 8th century BCE, and because it served the needs of the Deuteronomistic History, it was redacted in some, not very many, places.

This proposition calls attention to the historiographic work of the late 8th century BCE and later, which preceded Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic literature from the end of the 7th century and presumably influenced it. It emphasizes that the Deuteronomistic literature is a work-in-progress, which, though innovative, was not really born from nothing, but from pre-existing literature. It continues the processes and developments that took place in Judah from the 8th century BCE on, like the rise of the classical prophets, to whom the idea of devotion to God was predominant.

### IN SUM

Like Römer, I do not dismiss the idea of a Deuteronomistic History—I also accept his approach, which distinguishes three editorial stages. But in my view greater attention should be paid to the preceding stage, which lasted a good 100 years. These years were not 100 years of silence, meaning without historical writing.

Above all I wish to thank Römer in my own name and the names of my students, for this knowledgeable and useful book, thanks to which it is possible at long last to comprehend the depth and the significance of the phenomenon of the so-called Deuteronomistic History.

## RESPONSE TO RICHARD NELSON, STEVEN MCKENZIE, ECKART OTTO, AND YAIRAH AMIT

THOMAS RÖMER  
UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE,  
LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND

I recently heard about a proverb in the former communist countries saying: “You never know how the past will be made up tomorrow.” This is a very fine observation; we always reconstruct our past under new circumstances and we also reconstruct scholarly hypotheses of the past to make them fit better new ideological and/or scientific situations. And this is also what happened and still happens with the “so-called” Deuteronomistic History. First of all, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my esteemed colleagues who agreed to participate in this panel: Yairah Amit, Eckart Otto, Steven McKenzie, Richard Nelson, and Raymond Person. They have raised so many questions and offered so many helpful comments and themes for further research that I am unable to deal with them all during this response. But I hope to continue this discussion in the following years, since there is still plenty of work to do for the “Deuteronomistic History Section.”

Let me begin with some remarks about the English title “The So-Called Deuteronomistic History,” a question that Nelson rose. Indeed, the title may sound a bit strange. I did not think that this would give a pejorative tone. I was more inspired I guess by Schmid’s book “Der sogenannte Jahwist,”<sup>30</sup> in which he tried to show that one should not give up the idea of Yahwistic texts in the Pentateuch, but that there is need to redefine the term. I also thought and I still think that the term “Deuteronomistic History” is used in many different ways among scholars: some use the term as Noth put it, others think more of a document written during the seventh

---

<sup>30</sup> H. H. Schmid, *Der sogenannte Jahwist. Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976).

century, others still just take it as a “synchronic” designation for the books from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (Polzin for instance<sup>31</sup>), others again think that this term should only apply to the books of Kings.<sup>32</sup> One may get the impression that each scholar is constructing his own Deuteronomist or his own Deuteronomistic History. The panel of respondents is indeed quite representative of different views and approaches to the “Deuteronomistic History.” Amit and Nelson insist on the importance of the seventh century. Nelson is close to the model of Cross, which in a certain way takes up some ideas from Wellhausen, but seems to acknowledge that Deuteronomy was in a way separated from Joshua-Kings; Amit stresses the need to pay attention to the eighth century where scribal activity in Judah can be detected, whereas McKenzie, whom I labeled a Neo-Nothian,<sup>33</sup> defends the idea of one author in the exilic period; Otto as well as Person<sup>34</sup> would emphasize the importance of the Persian era as producing an important number of revisions and redactions, and Otto even claims that a Deuteronomistic History never existed at all.

Because of that situation I thought that it was adequate to speak of a “so-called” Deuteronomistic History. But I must confess that the translators were apparently not very happy with this title: in French the book is called “Israel’s first history,” in Italian “From Deuteronomy to the books of Kings” and in Japanese “The Making of a Historiography in the Old Testament.” I would like to add a “form-critical” remark: this book was conceived as an “introduction” for students, but the question immediately arose: to what kind of Deuteronomistic History should I introduce them? And having in mind that even if one writes for students one also writes for colleagues, I tried to pick up observations made by scholars from very different positions regarding the Deuteronomistic History and bring them together in some way or another. I am personally convinced, that in human sciences the opposition between “totally true” and “totally false” applies very rarely and that competing hypotheses can offer valuable insights, which may sometimes even be combined. That is what I tried to do in this book. I may have

---

<sup>31</sup> R. Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist. A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Seabury, 1980).

<sup>32</sup> Ernst Axel Knauf, “Does A ‘Deuteronomistic Historiography’ (DtrH) Exist?” A. de Pury, T. Römer, J.-D. Macchi (eds), *Israel Constructs its History. Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (JSOTSup, 306; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 388–98.

<sup>33</sup> T. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 31–32.

<sup>34</sup> R. F. Person Jr., *The Deuteronomistic School. History, Social Setting, and Literature* (Studies in Biblical Literature 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

done this sometimes too quickly, and was not always able to buttress my views in a satisfactory way.

Let me pick up some of the most important points and questions that arose in the reviews. I would like to organize these in the following way:

1) The question of the historicity of Josiah's reform account in 2 Kings 22, and the topic of the book-finding (a question raised by Nelson);

2) The question of pre-deuteronomistic texts and especially the book of Judges (this is an important point of Amit's paper) and the question of other sources (Elijah-Elisha, David, etc.);

3) The question of the social location of the Deuteronomists or of the Deuteronomist: an individual author or a group, school, etc. (this question was brought forward by McKenzie, Nelson and also Otto);

4) The importance or non-importance of the Persian Period for the Deuteronomistic History (this is a point that underlies most of the responses);

5) The end of the Deuteronomistic History in both senses: its ending and its disappearance (this also is a question that is common to most of the panelists);

6) What texts should we label "deuteronomistic" (a very important question brought up by Nelson)?

### **JOSIAH'S REFORM, 2 KINGS 22–23 AND THE ORIGIN OF THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY**

First of all, I am convinced that 2 Kings 22–23 does contain some historical data about political and cultic changes in Jerusalem at the end of the seventh century BCE. The reference to the horses and chariots of Shamash, the Sun-God, and to the *kemarim*-priests has historical plausibility in the Assyrian period.<sup>35</sup> Na'aman also pointed to the historical plausibility of "reforming kings" by citing examples from Akhenaton to Nabonidus.<sup>36</sup> Having said this, I remain convinced that most of the account in 2 Kings 22–23 as it stands now comes from the Babylonian and early Persian period. I remain especially convinced that the book-finding motif should be considered a later addition, even though I may have done too much "surgery" as Nelson puts it. What strikes me is that in the Chronicler's account the cultic reform, and the finding followed by the

---

<sup>35</sup> C. Uehlinger, "Was there a Cult Reform under King Josiah? The Case for a Well-Grounded Minimum," L. L. Grabbe, (ed), *Good Kings and Bad Kings. The Kingdom of Judah in the Seventh Century B.C.E.* (LHBOTS, 393; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 279–316.

<sup>36</sup> N. Na'aman, "The King Leading Cult Reforms in his Kingdom: Josiah and Other Kings in the Ancient Near East," *ZAR* 12 (2006), 131–68.

public reading of the book are clearly separated. 2 Chr 34:1–7 reports the destruction of all non-Yahwistic cult symbols in Josiah's eighth year, without any mention of a book, and only in 34:8–35:19 does the narrator report the book-finding, the public reading of the book and the Passover celebration in the eighteenth year of the king's reign (interestingly it is said in 35:17 that no Passover like that had been kept from the days of Samuel, whereas 2 Kgs 23:22 says "from the days of the judges that judged Israel"). The double account in Chronicles shows that the reform and the book-finding were not considered related to each other, and even if it may be impossible to reconstruct the older reform account in 2 Kings 22–23 verbatim one may recall that verse 22:8 stands a bit awkwardly between vv 3–7 and 9 (see also the double introduction in v 9 and 10; one may also recall that the literary distinction between a "finding account" and a "reform account" was a classic assumption in older research).

Regarding the finding and reading of the scroll, Nelson recalls that "Nabonidus reports finding the old foundation stone of Naram-Sin in order to support his contemporary policies." The difference with Josiah lies in the fact that his counselors do not find a foundation stone but a book and that the book is read in order to renew a covenant between Yhwh and Israel. The foundation stone has therefore been replaced by a scroll and the temple emptied of all cultic symbols has become a proto-synagogue of a sort, in which this scroll is read in public.

Josiah's behaviour according to the book is also constructed in opposition to Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 36, who burns the book that is presented to him. Of course, it depends a great deal whether one considers Jeremiah 36 as a historical report, which I am not so much inclined to do. Anyway, there is no doubt that both texts were meant to be read together; they oppose Josiah, "the good king," and Jehoiakim, "the bad king." Both kings are confronted by the discovery of a book, but they act in opposite ways. Interestingly, the fate announced to both kings contradicts the information given in the book of Kings. Josiah does not die peacefully but is slain by Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo (2 Kgs 23:29) while Jehoiakim, even though he did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh, "slept with his ancestors" (2 Kgs 24:6).

This apparent contradiction is a good example of the way reality can be made to fit the prophetic word. Huldah's oracle to Josiah is "true" in the sense that the "reforming king" dies before the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile, and Jeremiah's oracle to Jehoiakim is "true" since his reign was the time of the rise of the "enemy from the North" (Jeremiah 2–6) and his son Jehoiachin finished his life not on the throne of David, but on a seat next to the king of Babylon (2 Kgs 25:28). Therefore I have some difficulties considering Huldah's oracle as stemming from the seventh

century. The consultation of Huldah is, indeed, astonishing. A prophet is normally consulted when a major or minor problem arises for which no other solution is available (see 1 Sam 9:8–10; Ezek 20:1–2; Zech 7:3). A prophetic oracle depends only on the prophet's ability to contact God via trance or another method. In 2 Kgs 22:13–20, however, the prophetess' role is to interpret a book. There is no longer free access to the divine will. Huldah in 2 Kings 22 shares with Jeremiah in Jeremiah 36 the same fate: both prophets are no longer autonomous but depend on a book. Summing up: I think that 2 Kings 22–23 is based on a historical event, but reflects in its present form ideological concerns from the Babylonian and Persian periods.

This brings me to another question raised by Nelson: Why not imagine that the Deuteronomists started their work under Hezekiah or under Manasseh? Hezekiah is indeed, especially in Kings, presented as a forerunner of Josiah; but contrary to Josiah, his reign is not depicted in an entirely positive way. 2 Kgs 18:14–16 states that Hezekiah submitted himself to the Assyrian king; and the strange story about the Babylonian embassy ultimately alludes to the Babylonian exile. Sweeney is right, when he states that the Deuteronomistic account of Hezekiah displays an interest in Hezekiah's actions as partial causes for the Babylonian exile. I may add another reason, why I find it unlikely that Deuteronomistic activity began already under Hezekiah: I am quite convinced by the works of Steymans and Otto, who have shown, that the model of Deuteronomy's first edition is Esarhaddon's loyalty oath from 672 BCE.<sup>37</sup> If this is right and if the book of Deuteronomy belonged to the first writings of the Deuteronomists, then one would need to date it at least one decade after this treaty. It could be that the Deuteronomists were involved in Amon's murder as Nelson suggests, but I think it is easier to imagine that Deuteronomy's first edition was written after the Deuteronomists' rise to power than as an underground document under Manasseh. If they had to hide their scroll, then who were the recipients?

If Deuteronomistic activity started in the seventh century why then not imagine that the whole Deuteronomistic History existed already at that time? Nelson claims that many elements in the Deuteronomistic History have nothing to do with the fall of Jerusalem and the exile. He notably mentions the celebration of David's dynasty, the justification of the disaster that engulfed the Northern Kingdom, and advocacy of the Josianic reform. These are exactly

---

<sup>37</sup> H. U. Steymans, *Deuteronomium 28 und die adé zur Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons. Segen und Fluch im Alten Orient und in Israel* (OBO 145; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1995); E. Otto, *Das Deuteronomium. Politische Theologie und Rechtsreform in Juda und Assyrien* (BZAW 284; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999).



the themes emphasized by Cross (the sins of Jeroboam and the dynastic promise to David), but they do not cover the whole of the Deuteronomistic History, but rather only the books of Samuel and Kings. As to the construction of Deuteronomy as a Mosaic discourse before entering the land, I think that this fits an exilic situation better than Josiah's (in the oldest kernel of Deuteronomy 12 this setting outside the land does not appear, this is only the case in verses 8–12, which belong to an exilic redaction of the centralization law). So Otto may be right that the literary link between Deuteronomy and Joshua was only created in the exilic period.

I think Noth is still right that the coherence of the Deuteronomistic History is related to the events of 597 and 587. In his *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, Noth starts with the observation that the historical periods are construed by discourses, which he called “chapters of reflection.” Interestingly enough, in almost all of these speeches and narrator's comments we find allusions to the deportation and fall of Judah. These elements can only be eliminated from these speeches by much more radical surgery than the one I was blamed for. Therefore I remain convinced that the chronological arrangement of the Deuteronomistic History was made after the events of 587. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the whole Deuteronomistic History was written on a single scroll. There might be evidence that even the Babylonian edition of the Deuteronomistic History was written on three or four scrolls. I will take this point up again in giving some comments on the book of Judges.

#### THE USE OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES IN THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY AND THE DEUTERONOMISTS' ATTITUDE TO OLDER SOURCES

The book of Judges is indeed quite a puzzling piece inside the Deuteronomistic History. I agree with Amit that a first edition of this scroll predated its insertion in its present place. I also agree with her that the first edition of Judges “belongs to a generation that did not yet know Deuteronomy, its ideas and style.” But I wonder whether Judean scribes were the first writers of this scroll. I remain quite convinced by Richter's idea of a “book of saviours” stemming from the North<sup>38</sup> since, as Amit has reminded us, all the judges or saviours are located in Northern territories, except the editorial passage on Othniel. The stories that we can read inside the book do not betray a “pan-Israelite” perspective and certainly not a pro-Assyrian attitude as recently argued by Guillaume.<sup>39</sup> Originally

---

<sup>38</sup> W. Richter, *Die Bearbeitungen des “Retterbuches” in der deuteronomischen Epoche* (BBB 21; Bonn: Hanstein, 1964).

<sup>39</sup> P. Guillaume, *Waiting for Josiah. The Judges* (JSOTSup 385; London: T

there might have been a collection about local heroes, which was edited in the Northern Kingdom. Nelson recently argued that the list of the so-called minor judges found in chapters 10:1–5 and 12:7–15 originated as an anti-monarchic scribal construction composed in the Northern Kingdom, which was modelled after scribal conventions for summarizing royal successions but in order to subvert royal ideology.<sup>40</sup> If he is right, the scroll of Judges already existed before it came to Judah. I agree again with Amit that something must have happened in the mountains of Canaan before the rise of an Israelite monarchy, but I am sceptical whether we can use the book of Judges to reconstruct this reality. If the scroll about the judges was first kept in Bethel as suggested by Knauf,<sup>41</sup> its transfer to the South could easily be explained.

But now comes the crucial question: at which stage was the book of Judges incorporated into the Deuteronomistic History? Some scholars have recently observed that the book of Joshua ends in the mountains of Ephraim and that is exactly where the book of Samuel starts. Does this mean that there was at some stage a transition from the conquest to the stories about Saul and Samuel without the interlude of the Judges? Besides the Deuteronomistic introduction in Judges 2:6–3:6\* clear deuteronomistic texts appear scarcely, most clearly in 6:7–10 (maybe also in verses 11ff) and 10:6–16. Judges 6:7–10 is missing in a Qumran manuscript and may therefore be a much later addition. If one looks at the remaining deuteronomistic passages in Judges, it is striking that the deuteronomistic vocabulary is somewhat different than in the surrounding books. In Judges 2 and 10 the Israelites, in good deuteronomistic manner, are accused of venerating other deities. These deities are “normally” labelled *‘elohim ‘acherim*, a term that also occurs in Judges 2 (3 times) and once in 10:16. However in these texts the Israelites are also blamed for worshipping the *ba’alim* and the *‘ash-tarot*. Inside the Deuteronomistic History this expression only occurs in Judg 2:13; 10:6 and then in 1 Sam 7:4; 12:10 (see also the expression foreign gods which in Deuteronomy – 2 Kings only occurs in Josh 24:20, 23; Judg 10:16; 1 Sam 7:3; see however Deut 31:7). So one might speculate that there existed an independent deuteronomistic scroll about the judges reaching from Judg 2:6ff to 1 Samuel 12. Indeed, according to the Deuteronomists, Samuel is presented as the last judge. I wonder whether it is only by chance that Samuel, if one omits Samson as Noth and many others did, appears as the twelfth and last judge. The idea that there was a

---

& T Clark, 2004).

<sup>40</sup> R. D. Nelson, “Ideology, Geography, and the List of Minor Judges,” *JSTOT* 31 (2007), 347–364.

<sup>41</sup> E. A. Knauf, “Bethel,” *RGG<sup>4</sup>* 1 (1998), 1375–76.

separate scroll of Judges under the supervision of another scribe than the surrounding material could explain some stylistic differences inside Judges 2 – 1 Samuel 12. So maybe the Deuteronomistic History never existed on one scroll but on three: Deuteronomy – Joshua; Judges (Judges 2 – 1 Samuel 12); Samuel – Kings, which were of course considered to be in a chronological relation, but were not necessarily revised altogether at the same time.

Another aspect of Judges that would need further research is the presence of texts that betray parallels with Hellenistic literature: the story of Jephthah's daughter which can easily be recognized as an insertion reminds us clearly of the drama of Iphigenia, especially in the version of Euripides;<sup>42</sup> the fable of Jotham has a stunning parallel in a fable attributed to Aesop and the possible Hellenistic influences of the Samson stories have long been acknowledged.<sup>43</sup> These observations may indicate that the book of Judges underwent some special post-deuteronomistic editing.

Some comments on other sources inside the Deuteronomistic History:

The case of David is puzzling. In the books of Kings David is clearly the positive reference according to which all southern kings are evaluated. So Van Seters's idea that the so-called Succession Narrative or as he calls it the Court History should be seen as a later insertion, remains a good option.<sup>44</sup> One could modify the thesis and allow for a shorter account of the succession story, which would have been part of the Deuteronomistic History. It is noteworthy that the Chronicler does not report the episodes from the Succession Narrative, rather concentrating only on David's rise and preparations for the temple building. One could argue that the Chronicler deliberately omitted the court history; but it is also possible that he knew about a scroll in which this story had not yet been told. Of course, McKenzie is right that the story of David's rise also depicts an ambiguous portrayal of the Judean dynasty's founder, but these stories follow the pattern of the "young hero," who might very well make some errors before ascending to the throne; once he has become king he behaves, as a good king needs to. I am convinced that the Deuteronomists took over an older story, which they edited by showing that everything told in it hap-

---

<sup>42</sup> T. Römer, "Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?" *JSOT* 77 (1998), 27–38.

<sup>43</sup> C. Briffard, S. Goffard and L. Piccolin, *Pour lire aujourd'hui les textes de l'Antiquité* (Argos Démarches; Créteil: CRDP de l'Académie de Créteil, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> J. Van Seters, "The Court History and DtrH: Conflicting Perspectives on the House of David," A. de Pury and T. Römer (eds), *Die sogenannte Thronfolgegeschichte Davids. Neue Einsichten und Anfragen* (OBO, 176; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 2000), 70–93.

pened according to Yahweh's will. In this respect the Deuteronomists would only be "half-honest brokers": they took over traditions and perhaps written documents too but modified them in order to make them fit their intentions.

The question of prophetic material within the Deuteronomistic History is also a very complex one. The Germans have resolved the problem by attributing all prophetic stories to a DtrP, but the existence of this Deuteronomist remains somewhat dubious. There are indications that some prophetic stories, especially from the Elijah- and Elisha-Tradition, should be considered additions, as McKenzie brilliantly demonstrated.<sup>45</sup> 1 Kings 17–19, for instance, interrupt quite unexpectedly the Deuteronomistic report on Ahab's reign and reveal aspects that differ from deuteronomistic vocabulary and theology (the allusion to Jacob in 1 Kings 18 apparently presupposes the P-account in Genesis 35; the building of an altar does not fit with the idea of cult centralization; the polemics against Baal reminds us of texts from Second Isaiah; and so on). Nevertheless I would not generally exclude all prophetic material from the work of the Deuteronomists. The deuteronomistic text in Deuteronomy 18 presents Moses as Israel's first prophet that will be followed by others. The theme of Yahweh's constant sending of prophets comes to an end either in 2 Kings 17 or in the book of Jeremiah, since Jeremiah is presented in the deuteronomistic edition of his book as a prophet like Moses (see Jeremiah 1).

### HOW MANY DEUTERONOMISTS DO WE NEED?

McKenzie quite often asks me "how can schools write a book?" and this is indeed a good question. I am tempted to respond to this question with another question: "how much evidence do we have for individual authors in the Hebrew Bible?" We do not have any book in the Hebrew Bible that we could attribute to one individual author, who clearly expresses his view, except perhaps the book of Qoheleth, but even this case is disputable. The major difference between the Deuteronomistic History and Greek historians like Herodotus and Thucydides is that the latter ones speak in the first person, presenting and commenting on their sources, whereas in the Deuteronomistic History we hear voices of omniscient narrators, to pick up a term from narrative analysis, who have full knowledge of everything being told, even divine intentions. All Hebrew Bible literature is anonymous, we do not even have the name of the scribes who copied the texts, as this is the case, for instance, for the Gilgamesh epic or for some mythical tablets from Ugarit. Another point, which I would like to recall, is the differ-

---

<sup>45</sup> S. L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings. The Composition of the Books of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup, 42; Leiden: Brill, 1991).

ences within the deuteronomistic style and vocabulary that one is, thanks to electronic concordances, easily able to observe. For all these reasons, I remain convinced that the Deuteronomistic History, as well as the Priestly material and most of the prophetic books, are works that should be attributed to groups of scribes or high officials, which can include priests as well as lay people. Of course, McKenzie is right, that we do not have much evidence inside the Hebrew Bible about the existence and organization of scribal guilds. But we do have evidence from Mesopotamia and Egypt that there existed scribal hierarchies (see also the work of Person) and that those chief scribes were important people in administration, civil servants, who accumulated and codified knowledge for their masters but also for themselves. Hence, scribes can be identified as intellectuals or sages. It seems quite logical that those people also existed in Israel and in Judah during the period of the monarchies, and that many Judean scribes were deported to Babylon. The rest is, of course, speculation. But Noth too did speculate, when guessing in a footnote that the Deuteronomist could have written his opus in Mizpah. I find that the Deuteronomistic history has more of a Golah perspective: 1 Kings 8 presupposes a community that prays from outside the land in direction to the Temple, 2 Kings 25 clearly states that Judah went into exile and creates the idea of an empty land during the exile and finally the whole story ends in Babylon. “Golah perspective” would then mean that the “exilic” edition of the deuteronomistic scrolls could have been done in Babylon in order to be read for the Judeans deported there and to convince them that Babylonians acted according to Yhwh’s will. But a “Golah perspective” can also serve as foundation for texts from the early Persian period composed by members of the former Golah who had returned to Judah. That brings us to our next point.

### THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY AND THE PERSIAN PERIOD

It is no secret that we do not have much evidence for dating the Deuteronomistic History. We can, of course, follow Noth and claim that the *terminus a quo* is the last event reported in 2 Kings 25, that is, Jehoiachin’s release from Babylonian prison, which took place around 562 BCE. But not all scholars would agree that the last verses of the books of Kings are identical with the original ending. For the *terminus ad quem* Noth only stated, “we have no reason to put Dtr. much later than this *terminus a quo*.”<sup>46</sup> After Noth, it has often been observed that the Deuteronomistic History

---

<sup>46</sup> M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup, 15; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 27.

contains no clear allusion to the Persian period (contrary to the end of Chronicles) and should therefore be dated at the latest during the Neo-Babylonian period. Nevertheless, one may wonder whether what I have called the exilic edition could also be placed at the beginning of the Persian era. Eissfeldt, one of the harshest critics of Martin Noth, already raised the question whether it would be reasonable to assume that after Jerusalem's destruction and the deportation to Babylon people did not have anything else to do except sit down and write or edit the Deuteronomistic History.<sup>47</sup>

The question whether the Babylonian period offers a fitting setting for the production of literature should be taken seriously, but we cannot rule out the possibility of writing and editing during the 570's to the 540's in Babylon and maybe even in Judah. But I would like to explain now why I postulate for some texts inside the Deuteronomistic History a Persian period setting (let's say around 450). There are indeed some texts that seem to reflect issues and controversies from the Persian period. This seems to be the case with texts like Deut 7; 12:2–7; 23:1–9; Josh 23:7–12; 2 Kgs 17:12–77 and others reveal an ideology of segregation, which fits into the Persian period. Nelson asked why one could not understand those texts as a “vilification of the people's traditional religious practices of the late monarchy.” To this I would like to answer that the best literary parallels to these texts outside the Deuteronomistic History can be found in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah (see especially for Deuteronomy 7; Ezra 9; the almost identical list of the nations in the land in Deut 7:3 and Ezra 9:1; or the exclusion of the Moabites and Ammonites in Deuteronomy 23, which apparently alludes to Nehemiah's main opponents Tobiah the Ammonite, Neh 13:4–9, and Sanballat the Moabite, Neh 13:28). McKenzie finds the idea of the Golah community as the true people of Yhwh and the movement toward diaspora, which I tried to detect in the Persian period layer, as alien to the deuteronomistic idea of centralization; I am not convinced by this objection. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah show that members of the Babylonian Golah supported the rebuilding of the Temple and of Jerusalem. They accepted the idea of centralization and invented the synagogues in order to live a religious life far away from the Temple.

Other texts with a Persian period setting are certainly Deuteronomy 4 and 26:12–15, as well as the latest layer of Solomon's Temple speech. These texts are characterized by a monotheistic conception, whereas most of the deuteronomistic texts should be labelled “monolatric.” They are influenced by Priestly and Second Isaianic ideas and terms and should therefore be placed in the be-

---

<sup>47</sup> O. Eissfeldt, *Geschichtsschreibung im Alten Testament* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1948).

ginning or middle of the fifth century BCE. The Persian period redaction of the Deuteronomistic History did not alter the “exilic perspective” of the history. It introduced themes that were important at that time, accepting or even buttressing the idea that “exile” had become an important part of the identity of rising Judaism.

### THE END AND THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

The question of the present ending of the books of Kings is an ongoing debate. Do these verses belong to the Deuteronomistic history? And if so, do they just report the latest news that the Deuteronomist had at his disposal (Noth)? Or, do they on the contrary express hope for the monarchy’s renewal or even messianic expectations (von Rad)?<sup>48</sup> I am more impressed by the parallels that this short story shares with the Joseph, Esther and Daniel (Daniel 2–6) narratives and have therefore argued that these verses could be read as legitimating a diaspora situation through a reference to the king’s fate. But I agree that the end of 2 Kings 25 can also be read differently (a compromise solution would be to understand 25:28–29, where the parallels to the diaspora novellas occur, as a later insertion). The quite abrupt ending should not intrigue scholars that much, since a look at the endings of Herodotus and Thucydides shows that these historians ended their works abruptly as well.

When did the Deuteronomistic History come to an end, when was it deconstructed? In my view, Deut 34:10–12 shows that this happened when the Torah was created. The epilogue about Moses (which corrects the deuteronomistic idea of Moses as Israel’s first prophet) clearly separates Deuteronomy from the following books. Something similar occurs in Joshua 24, Joshua’s second farewell discourse. I would like to quote again Nelson: “Joshua 23 works well as a summary to the book of Joshua ... Chapter 24, in contrast, seems designed as a conclusion for the Hexateuch as a whole.”<sup>49</sup> This means that Joshua 24 and Deut 34:10–12 could be located approximately at the same time around 400 (Joshua 24 probably a bit earlier); both texts reflect a conflict between advocates of a Hexateuch and a Pentateuch, as Otto and others have shown.<sup>50</sup> Both texts also participated in the Deuteronomistic His-

<sup>48</sup> G. von Rad, “Die deuteronomistische Geschichtstheologie in den Königsbüchern (1947),” *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (TB 8; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1958), 189–204.

<sup>49</sup> R. D. Nelson, *Joshua. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 1997), 268.

<sup>50</sup> E. Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch. Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumsrahmens* (FAT 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

tory's dissolution. The addition of Joshua 24 created a break between Joshua 23 and Judg 2:6ff and the need for a new introduction to the book of Judges, to be fulfilled by Judges 1, which offers an alternative conquest account. At the same time Samuel was perhaps exclusively related to the scrolls to which his name was given and the appendices in Judges 19–21 (which contain some connections with chapter 1; see 20:18 and 1:1). The separation between Samuel and Kings with the insertion of 2 Samuel 21–24 (see the inclusion made by the psalm of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2 and the psalm of David in 2 Samuel 22) may have happened at the same time.

If these observations have some plausibility and if the Deuteronomistic History was dismantled at the time the Torah was set up, we should limit the existence of our Deuteronomists from the seventh to the end of the fifth century BCE. This brings me to my last point.

### WHAT DOES “DEUTERONOMISTIC” MEAN?

As I said in my introductory remarks the present research on “deuteronomism” is quite confusing and one gets the impression that almost every scholar has his/her own idea of what “Deuteronomistic” should mean. I remember a panel in this same section about pan-deuteronomism organized by Scheering and McKenzie, where this problem was already flagrant.<sup>51</sup> I am convinced that scholarly research on deuteronomism can only progress if we reach a consensus on how to use the term deuteronomistic. I have no clear idea of how to achieve such a consensus, especially since biblical scholars are reluctant to consensuses. I would suggest that there should be at least some objective control on the expressions that we might consider to be deuteronomistic; but on the other hand it is impossible to restrain the definition of “deuteronomistic” to a purely linguistic level, because otherwise we would find very late texts up to the New Testament that could be labelled “deuteronomistic.” Therefore we cannot limit ourselves to stylistic criteria; these must be complemented by chronological as well as ideological criteria. However, here things start to become subjective and dangerous.

### SOME FINAL WORDS

To conclude I would like to thank again all panellists and assure each of them that we have points of agreement. With Otto, I share the idea that there was no Deuteronomistic History in the way that

---

<sup>51</sup> Linda S. Scheering and Steven L. McKenzie (eds.), *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (JSOTSup, 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).



Noth put it. With McKenzie I agree on the importance of the exile; with Amit and Nelson I am convinced that deuteronomistic activity started in the seventh century. Can we all come closer? Let us hope that future meetings and research will allow us to get new insight in Noth's great invention.